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LETTER DATED 10 MARCH 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KUWAIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of the final communiqué adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its sixty-sixth session, held at the seat of its secretariat in Riyadh on 7 and 8 March 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad A. ABULHASAN
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Final communiqué adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its sixty-sixth session, held in Riyadh on 7 and 8 March 1998

The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its sixty-sixth session on 7 and 8 March 1998 at the seat of its secretariat under the chairmanship of His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman; and

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Bin Ibrahim al-Hegelan, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council reviewed recent developments in the progress made in cooperation in the political, military, economic, social, information and legal fields as well as regional and international political and security-related developments since the eighteenth session of the Supreme Council.

Progress made in cooperation

The Council was informed of the results of the meetings held by a number of ministerial committees concerned with joint economic action. It reviewed the decisions taken by the Committee on Commercial Cooperation at its twenty-fourth meeting concerning the elaboration of rules governing the ownership and circulation of shares and rules for the wholesale trade, a more active role for joint Arab and foreign chambers of commerce, the uniform code of conduct for corporations, and the continuation of work on and the improvement of some of the guidelines elaborated. It was informed of the decisions taken by the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation at its forty-sixth meeting concerning the standardization of the customs tariff for member States vis-à-vis the rest of the world as a preliminary step towards the establishment of a customs union, the issues involved in facilitating the employment of national manpower in member States, and cooperation in the banking sector. The Council endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation concerning

the importance of collective action by member States in opening up new prospects for cooperation and economic dialogue with the countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations, with China and with any other groupings with a view to establishing fruitful and sustained cooperation to contribute to advancing common interests and securing mutual advantages. The Council noted the recommendations of the Committee on Economic and Social Planning concerning unified future-oriented approaches to development in member States and the basic principles of the GCC population strategy. It was informed of the results of the eighth meeting of the Committee on Agricultural and Hydrological Cooperation, including the Committee's recommendation that a comprehensive survey be conducted of shrimp fisheries and of benthic fish stocks. It took note of the twelfth annual report of the GCC Standards Authority on its activities.

The Council was also informed of the decisions and recommendations of ministerial and technical committees relating to the expansion and development of cooperation among member States in the security-related fields, in legal matters, with regard to man and the environment and in the information field. It further reviewed military cooperation among member States, and it expressed satisfaction at the progress made in that regard.

Political affairs

Implementation by Iraq of the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait

The Council considered developments in connection with the implementation by Iraq of the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait. It expressed satisfaction that the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Iraqi Government had agreed on a memorandum of understanding on the conduct of the international inspection teams' tasks. It commended in this connection the positive role that had been played by Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Council also expressed satisfaction at the adoption of Security Council resolution 1154 (1998) as embodying the collective international resolve that Iraq must comply with the agreement reached. The Council welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1153 (1998) under which Iraq is permitted to increase its petroleum revenues from 2 billion to 5.2 billion dollars every six months in order to reinforce the "oil-for-food" programme and secure the food and medicine that the fraternal Iraqi people need and mitigate their suffering. It reaffirmed the importance and indeed the necessity of Iraq's unconditional implementation of all of the Security Council resolutions without exception, particularly those relating to the elimination of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the release of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and detainees and the return of Kuwaiti property, and of its compliance with resolution 949 (1994) by refraining from any hostile or provocative action against neighbouring States.

The Council recalls the statement made in the final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council at its eighteenth session to the effect that Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait were a violation of the inter-Arab and international

covenants and of the international rule of law and that it was therefore incumbent on Iraq to acknowledge that it had violated the Pact of the League of Arab States and the Joint Defence and Economic Cooperation Treaty between the States of the Arab League, as well as the Charter of the United Nations, when it occupied the State of Kuwait. At the Kuwait summit meeting, the Supreme Council also called upon Iraq to take the necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards Kuwait and the States of the region by word and deed so as to ensure the security and stability of all the States of the region.

In this context, the Council stressed its firm position in support of preserving the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, and relations with Iran

(a) The occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates

The Council reviewed developments with regard to the issue of Iran's occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, islands that belong to the United Arab Emirates. It reaffirmed its great sadness that there had been no positive developments in this regard owing to the Islamic Republic of Iran's continued failure to respond to the earnest and sincere appeals made to it by the United Arab Emirates, by the GCC States and by other regional groupings and organizations for a peaceful settlement to the dispute.

In this regard, the Council reaffirmed the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands and its unconditional support for all the peaceful measures it is taking to re-establish that sovereignty. It again urges the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the islands, to desist from its policy of imposing faits accomplis by force, to refrain from building Iranian installations there with a view to changing the demographic composition of the islands, to rescind all unilateral measures taken in the past and remove all of the installations built, and to resolve the present dispute by peaceful means in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, including agreement to refer the issue to the International Court of Justice.

(b) Relations with Iran

The Council discussed developments in connection with relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in accordance with the established positions of its member States with regard to the promotion of good relations with it based on good-neighbourliness and compliance with the principles of mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, the non-use or threat of use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The positive statements made by Mr. Mohammed Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, concerning the intention of the Iranian Government to turn a new page in relations with the GCC member States have been welcomed by those States. The recent important visit to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain of His Excellency Mr. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Chairman of the Committee to Determine the Expediency of the Islamic Order, also reflects a new vision of relations with the GCC States that may build bridges of mutual trust and place them on secure

foundations, may bring about genuinely positive developments for the two sides and may solve existing differences, chief among them the question of ending Iran's occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates in such a way as to bring security, stability and prosperity to the region and its peoples.

The peace process in the Middle East

The Council reviewed developments in the peace process and its constant deterioration as a result of the Israeli Government continuing to pursue policies of procrastination, sophistry and evasion with regard to its compliance with the agreements concluded with the Palestinian Authority and with the obligations that they entail and because of its violations of the undertakings given to the Arab and international parties. The Netanyahu Government is continuing to take unilateral measures, to expropriate Palestinian land by establishing new settlements and expanding existing ones, to destroy the Palestinian economy by imposing a stifling embargo and to take other measures that are incompatible with the provisions, tenor and principles of the agreements concluded with a view to achieving a genuine peace in the Middle East.

As the Council recalls the unconditional rejection of the policies and practices of the Israeli Government that the GCC States have frequently voiced, it calls upon that Government, once more, to fulfil its obligations and comply with its undertakings, to implement the agreements concluded with the Palestinian Authority and, in particular, to carry out the redeployment in the West Bank, to begin the final-status negotiations with the Palestinians and to enable the Palestinian people to establish an independent State on the soil of its homeland with its capital at Jerusalem.

The Council further urges the Israeli Government to resume negotiations with Syria from the point reached in the previous rounds. It calls for Israel's complete withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Arab Golan to the boundary line of 4 June 1967 in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and for its complete withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The Council commends the international consensus and the international insistence, based on conviction and understanding, on the need to maintain and strengthen the peace process and on the importance of compliance with the provisions of existing agreements and of the resumption of negotiations on all tracks on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace. In this connection, the Council calls upon the co-sponsors of the peace process to make greater efforts to extricate the peace process from the deadlock in which it finds itself, and it urges the European Union and its member States to play a more active and effective role in averting the failure of the peace process and in inducing Israel to resume negotiations on all tracks in order to put the peace process back on its proper course with a view to achieving a just and comprehensive peace.

Elimination of weapons of mass destruction

The Council expressed concern at the persistence of programmes for weapons of mass destruction in the region, and it reiterates its call to the international community for action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council affirmed once again that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all of its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

Extremism, violence and terrorism

The Council affirms once more that extremism, violence and terrorism are global phenomena that are not restricted to any particular people or region, and it reaffirms its commitment to its unconditional repudiation and rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism from whatever source they may come. The Council further expresses its regret that certain States are continuing to shelter extremist terrorist elements on grounds of protecting human rights. The Council reiterates its call to those States to distinguish between such rights and terrorist practices that threaten the security, integrity and stability of States and place their citizens and residents in the greatest jeopardy. It also urges these States, once again, to prevent such elements and extremist and terrorist groups from using their territory and exploiting their laws in order to obtain funding and weapons and from engaging in any other activities that threaten the security and integrity of States.

The Council decided to appoint His Excellency Mr. Jabbarah al-Suraysari, Deputy Minister of Finance and National Economy of Saudi Arabia, as general coordinator of negotiations with States and international economic groupings.